THE
RECONSTRUCTIONIST

DEDICATED TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF JUDAISM AS A RELIGIOUS CIVILIZATION, TO THE UPBUILDING OF ISRAEL'S ANCIENT HOMELAND, AND TO THE FURTHERANCE OF UNIVERSAL FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND PEACE.

Vol. II. October 16, 1936 Tishri 30, 5697 No. 12

EDITORIALS

ANGLING FOR THE "JEWISH VOTE"
NATIONAL JEWISH EDUCATION WEEK
LEON BLUM: FRENCHMAN AND JEW
IS GOD A CAPITALIST?

THE ROOTS OF THE WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

By Joshua Starr

THREE POEMS

By Abraham M. Klein

PALESTINE RHAPSODY

By Miriam J. Cohen

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EDITORIALS

Angling for the "Jewish Vote"

THE political campaign of 1936 draws rapidly to a close. As the contest rises to its climax, the two major parties strain to win all possible adherents. In a democracy, racial, religious or ethnic differences are officially non-existent; citizens are expected to vote for the candidates or parties they conscientiously consider the best from the point of view of the general welfare, and the candidates are expected to appeal to the citizens purely on the basis of the political and economic issues involved. But despite these officially acknowledged principles, the two major parties are only too obviously angling for the "Jewish vote." They might indignantly deny that such a thing as the "Jewish vote" existed, or that the "religious" issue had been injected into the campaign; but the fact remains that, to all but utterly naive observers, it is very apparent that the Democrats and the Republicans have made distinctly recognizable efforts to impress the Jews with their friendliness.

The Republicans have demonstrated their affection for the Jews by first of all heatedly denying that they were anti-Semitic. Secondly, they engineered an expedition to Palestine. As everyone knows, Mr. Landon, the Republican candidate for President, was Mr. Hearst's favorite; and it was Mr. Hearst who sent Senator Copeland together with two other Senators to Palestine to study conditions there. Quite naturally Senator Copeland returned with great enthusiasm for the Jews and great contempt for the Arabs. In our opinion, no fair-minded person could have taken the Senator's trip and come back with very different opinions. At the same time, however, no fair-minded person can fail to understand that Mr. Hearst's zeal to have Senator Copeland see conditions for himself had something very definite to do with the candidacy of Mr. Landon on the Republican ticket.

The pro-Roosevelt Democrats have also taken up the cudgels for the Jews—all of a sudden. A group of Senators (Dem.) issued a strong statement opposing the contemplated suspension of Jewish immigration into Palestine. No Jew could have been disappointed by this display of semi-official indignation; but no intelligent Jew should have forgotten that this is a Presidential-election year.

The question may well be asked, however: Does all this not signify that, no matter who is elected, the Jews may feel assured that their rights will be protected? Is it not a comfort, after all, to know that both parties abjure anti-Semitism? The answer to this question involves the whole prolem of the causes of anti-Semitism, and goes far beyond the scope of this comment. But it should be said here, briefly, that the protestations of both political parties mean very little indeed. Anti-Semitism as an attitude can perhaps be cured, ultimately, only by education. But

the effects of anti-Semitism—discrimination, injustice, persecution—can be counteracted in only one of two ways: either the economic roots of anti-Semitism must be destroyed, or protection against anti-Semites must be assured *by law*. The Constitution protects the Jews against possible anti-Semitism by the government; but no law exists as yet which might protect the Jews against the anti-Semitism of the people.

Now, if some measure of economic justice will be achieved by the successful candidate, there will be little need of his help in opposing anti-Semitism; a great deal of it will die with the decrease in poverty and hunger. But if present economic conditions persist, what then? Do the candidates promise before election anything more than pious approval of good-will? If they were really sincere about their desire to oppose anti-Semitism, they would propose some legal method whereby offenders could be punished. They would at least advocate *outlawing* anti-Semitism. The task is not an easy one, as the recent report of the Lawyers' Advisory Committee of the American Jewish Committee indicates. Attempts at recourse to law involves the ticklish problem of avoiding the violation of the rights of free speech, and free assembly. In Russia, where these rights are not granted, as yet, the outlawry of anti-Semitism was a comparatively easy job; in the United States, these rights are still held sacred and we Jews should be the last ones to jeopardize their sanctity. But if the task is difficult, so is it difficult for Roosevelt to introduce national planning against a hostile Supreme Court; so would it be difficult for Landon to reduce taxes and at the same time continue to dispense relief.

No, it is not that the task is difficult. The major political parties simply could not be bothered about the security of a small minority group, and Jews should not be deceived by the fine words and kind sentiments of presidential candidates. If anti-Semitism will be uprooted in the United States, it will not be the accomplishment of any one man or any one party acting directly on the problem. Anti-Semitism will be reduced in proportion as unemployment, poverty and oppression are diminished, and Jews should vote for that program which in their opinion will mitigate or abolish these social evils.

National Jewish Education Week

THE National Council for Jewish Education has designated the month of Tishri as Jewish Education Enrollment Month, and the last week of the month, October 10th to October 16th, as National Jewish Education Week. The National Council is to be congratulated on taking this step, and rabbis, educators, and Jewish communal leaders all over the country should welcome the opportunity to join forces with the National Council in its effort to focus the attention of the entire American Jewish community upon the problem of Jewish education. Almost every Bureau of Jewish Education and every Board of a local school were compelled to conduct a drive for funds and increased enrollment sometime during the year, and it is much better for all the Jewish educational agencies concerned to conduct a nation-wide campaign jointly.

It is superfluous to speak of the importance of Jewish education. Without Jewish education the survival of the Jewish people as a living creative force is unthinkable. It is not enough, however, merely to stress how important it is for every child to get a Jewish education, as is customary in most Jewish education drives. For the truth of the matter is that from seventy-five to ninety per cent of the Jewish children do get some kind of Jewish education. They may attend a Sunday School; they may attend a weekday school for a half year, and drop out; they may receive private instruction for only a little time; but the vast majority of the children do get some kind of Jewish education at some time. Jewish parents, in other words, are not as indifferent to

the Jewish education of their children as we are sometimes led to believe.

The trouble lies not in getting parents to want a Jewish education for their children, but in getting the parents to want the *right kind of Jewish education* for their children, and in getting them to keep their children in school for a longer period of time. Parents are too ready to entrust their children to any kind of *heder* or private instructor or even school, without bothering to find out what is taught in the school, and what the qualifications of the teacher or *melamed* are.

If the nation-wide campaign for Jewish education is to mean anything, it must bring home to Jews all over the land the importance not only of giving children a Jewish education, but what is even more essential, the importance of giving children the right kind of Jewish education, in proper schools manned by properly qualified teachers. Properly qualified teachers cannot be attracted to the field of Jewish education with conditions as they are. Jewish teachers are hired on a cheap competitive basis, often without references to their training and experience, and most of them are paid less than day laborers. It is futile to talk of tenure and annual increments. During the past five years, congregations and bureaus of education have almost all balanced their budgets at the expense of the teachers. When poor unqualified teachers are hired it is the children who suffer. It is thus impossible to get the right kind of Jewish education without getting the right kind of teacher. And the right kind of teacher must be properly paid and properly trained.

The rejoinder will be made that budgets have to be balanced, anyway; that local boards are compelled to cut salaries, if the schools are to be kept open at all. The trouble is that teachers' salaries are cut even when there is no necessity for it. And yet it cannot be glibly assumed that all directors of school boards are deliberately seeking to undermine the position of the Jewish teacher. The truth is that in many localities no solution will be found until some communal agency is organized to deal with the problem on a community basis. And that should be another point we should stress in our nation-wide appeal for Jewish education.

Lastly, it should be pointed out that in advocating Jewish education, we should stress that education is a "must" not only for children, but for adolescents and adults as well. It is a continuous process, and all of us from five to seventy-five should carry on that process throughout life.

Leon Blum: Frenchman and Jew

IF it can be said that any one man stands at the crux of the whole world's political and economic affairs, it can be said of Leon Blum, the present Premier of France. He is the spearhead of the democratic forces on the European continent, practically speaking, in the world. It is not likely, therefore, that he would utter words without thought, without extreme care. Hundred-per cent Americans, Frenchmen, Italians, Germans, and superpatriotic Jews of these and other countries should therefore take note of M. Blum's recent statement which we cannot refrain from quoting at length:

"As far as I personally am concerned, I am a French Jew, and I may conscientiously claim to be a good Frenchman as well. I was born in Paris, in the heart of France. My parents and grandparents lived in Paris. My ancestors were Alsatians, hence also French. I was reared as a Frenchman, attended French schools, my friends were French—and I labored for France. . . .

"I speak French perfectly without the slightest trace of a foreign accent. Even my features are entirely free from those racial traits which might be especially noticeable. Hence, I regard myself as being assimilated, wholly integrated. I feel with a sure inner conscience and certainty that there is no element (no matter how difficult it may be) of the French spirit,

of the French concept of honor, or of French culture, which could possibly be foreign to me. Yet, although I regard myself as a true Frenchman, I know that I am at the same time a Jew.

"Furthermore, I have never yet felt the slightest contradiction of these two phases of my conscience. For one can certainly be susceptible to a dual loyalty. Attachment to a country does not at all preclude the possibility of allegiance to another group of another human society.

"We can belong to the Jewish community, body and soul, yet we can be wholly French in our feelings and sensibilities. Here there is no difficulty and no contradiction. A Jew may be a Frenchman in every respect without loosing the ties that bind him to his Jewish community. Such examples of a double loyalty may be adduced from all periods of time."

M. Blum is a Socialist, a Labor Zionist, an ardent Jew and a Frenchman. We nominate him for the post of organizer of the French-Jewish Reconstructionist movement.

Is God A Capitalist?

WE have become accustomed in this land to see subversive Fascist movements cloak their nefarious designs with the words "Patriotic" and "American" in their official names or titles. We have even seen a Catholic priest under the pretense of preaching "social justice" repeatedly and deliberately committing the social *in*justice of fomenting anti-Semitic prejudice and urging violence against democratically-elected anti-capitalist governments.

Recently we have witnessed the widely-publicized drive of an organization which calls itself the "National Committee for Religion and Welfare Recovery" sponsored by wealthy businessmen with the endorsement of many priests, ministers and rabbis. Its objectives, as stated in its catalogue, include "the strengthening of increased loyalty to established religions and character - building institutions," and among other things it sponsors an annual "Loyalty Day" to Church and Synagogue.

The avowed objective of defending established capitalist institutions (euphemistically called "character-building") received further confirmation from the speeches made by the speakers at the public "Loyalty Day" meeting recently held in New York. One speaker pleaded for the kind of religious teaching among the youth that would make them "impregnable to the vicious attacks of Communism and Atheism and other destructive agencies." Another speaker, a well-known Republican, came to the defense of God by declaring that "Karl Marx's son-in-law boasted Marx had turned God out of history. There is the issue for you." Decrying "the few who join movements of protest," he openly declared, "I instinctively distrust a revolutionary social gospel."

There was no speaker of the Socialist Party, but Mr. James W. Gerard, who is high in the councils of the Democratic Party, the man who recently expressed himself as favoring the side of the Fascist insurrectionists against the duly-elected People's Government of Spain, made the following impassioned remarks at the meeting dedicated to loyalty to Religion:

"Communism means the murder of ministers and priests, the burning of churches, the end of religion and all rights to private property. Already too many of our teachers are saying that capitalism is outworn and must go. If capitalism goes, what is there left to take its place but Communism? . . . I am sure that many of you remember that old hymn which begins 'Give me the old time religion'. In my opinion we would all be better off today if we had more of that kind of faith."

In view of the above, it seems to us that the "National Committee for Religion and Welfare Recovery" ought to be named "The National Church and Synagogue Alliance for the Defense of Capitalism." At least then it would not hide its reactionary pretensions behind the high-sounding title of "Religion and Welfare Recovery."

To help recovery and the cause of religion, the Church and Synagogue today,

instead of employing religious sanctities for a holy crusade against Communism, ought to be concerned with spreading the truth about the present crisis and ought to preach a socially-minded ethical approach in the solution of our social problems. Instead of identifying God with the capitalist system and private property and instead of defending the status quo, the Church and Synagogue ought to be busy generating among its membership the social and religious idealism necessary for stimulating social change and social reconstruction. Then, indeed, would there be loyalty to "Religion and Welfare Recovery." Instead of inveighing against Communists and Atheists, leaders in Church and Synagogue ought to help create a mood of rebellion and struggle against the social injustices that make men become anti-church and social revolutionaries.

It is no accident that the Loyalty Day meeting in New York denounced the Communists but did not denounce the Fascists in this country—Father Coughlin, for example. Religious leaders should be on their guard against permitting privileged and reactionary businessmen to exploit religious sanctities in order to veil and defend the injustice of our profit-seeking civilization. God is not a capitalist and loyalty to the highest in religion is not synonymous with a defense of private property and capitalist institutions.

The Roots of the World Jewish Congress*

By Joshua Starr

THE initiation of plans for a World Jewish Congress a few years ago was the signal for the beginning of a spirited controversy over a most important issue. The opponents of the idea advanced a variety of arguments all based on a familiar contention, namely, that the proper approach toward all the difficulties facing the Jew is by way of existent organizations, each working within the political borders of its respective state. And while they conceded, of course, that the cooperation of Jews in France with those in Turkey is legitimate upon occasion, they insisted that this must take the form either of philanthropy or of confidential meetings of notables, rather than of an open conference of elected representatives. Now this desire to avoid thoroughgoing international action on Jewish issues has its *psychological* justification; there are many well-meaning Jews who desire to consider themselves simply citizens of their native or adopted land. So strong is that feeling that it blinds them to the fact that their position is devoid of any *historical* justification. An analysis of the outstanding achievements in Jewish history within the memory of the living elder generation as well as those of earlier centuries, will amply prove, first: *that the Jewish problem has been handled by sovereign states regularly on an international plane,* and, secondly: *that the activities of the Jews themselves have been most effective when guided by that realization.*

The most curious aspect of the situation today is that in opposing the World Congress, the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* should be aligned with such a purely intrastate body as the American Jewish Committee. For the Alliance was organized in 1860 with an international program and had consequently to face exactly the same objections which its leaders today raise against the World Jewish Congress. In a manner strangely familiar to us, a leading German Jewish rabbi of those

*The historical bearings of this question came home to me with great force while I was enjoying the privilege of reading the manuscript of an important work which is about to appear: *Jews and Judaism: A Study in Social and Religious History,* by Professor Salo W. Baron of Columbia University. I am indebted to that book for a large part of the facts included in this article.

days, Ludwig Philippson, solemnly warned the participants in the new movement that they were lending color to the accusation of a sinister international Jewish conspiracy. "The very name makes thousands of Christians shudder," he wrote; yet our own generation today knows that such designations as "Universal Jewish Alliance"—or World Jewish Congress—give the rabid anti-Semite and not the average Gentile cause for concern. Philippson went on in the now familiar vein to contend further that the attack on Jewish rights is ordinarily limited to a particular region, and, "the defence must therefore also be local." Finally, he protested,—and again we readily recognize the point—that the Alliance has no right to speak in the name of Jewry until it shall have won the most widespread support. The first generation of Alliance *leadership* successfully withstood this as well as more serious attacks against its program, but the second and third generation in our own day has failed to measure up to the stature of the founders. In fact, their vision has become obscured and they have succumbed to the same half-truths which threatened their movement at its birth.

The opposition to the *Alliance* can best be understood if we recall that the organization was projected in a period during which the Jews of Europe were achieving political equality in their respective states. This involved complicated and lengthy struggles first in France, beginning with the Revolution in 1789, and then in England, Prussia, Austria-Hungary, and Roumania. Thus it was natural that Jewish attention at that time should have been focused on each government separately, as it dealt with the pros and cons of the emancipation of its Jewish subjects, rather than upon the international aspects of this and other problems. Nevertheless, for centuries the decisive control over the economic and political lot of the Jew in Europe had been vested in the Pope, his advisers, and in those Church Councils which resembled our League of Nations much more than they do a modern Eucharist Congress. It was at these Councils that the relations between Jew and Christian were regulated, and the Jew's position in the world defined. Even such a mere detail as the prohibition of the joint use of a public bath by members of both faiths in Spain or anywhere else would be enacted by an international body of prelates meeting in Constantinople in the seventh century. Later on more important problems such as blood-accusations, which were precipitated in obscure towns, were regularly handled by the Pope and his investigators. To have depended on a local official for a just decision in such a matter would be like asking a community in Kansas or in Finland today to expose by means of its own resources the falsity of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion.

Very much like the German refugees today, the Marranos a few hundred years ago presented a problem of a distinctly international character. When Ferdinand and Isabella found themselves unable to deal with the problem of these secret Jews on a national basis, they turned to the neighboring state of Portugal and made it clear that it would not do to have that land serve as a haven for the refugees or for any other Jews. Then the ambassador to England was instructed to arrange to have Marranos barred from that country and he thereupon approached the king. Henry VII, "laying both his hands on his breast, swore that he would persecute without mercy any Jew or heretic that the King or Queen of Spain might point out in his dominions."

But even the establishment of an Inquisition in Portugal involved the Portuguese government in protracted negotiations with the Pope, and to complete the international setting, several years later we find the Grand Turk himself, Suleiman the Magnificent, interceding on behalf of some Marranos imprisoned in an Italian city by order of the Pope. Today the refugees and the Jewish emigrant in general are faced with economic barriers inconceivable in the sixteenth century, and the international Nazi network far surpasses the amateur attempts of their Cath-

olic majesties in Spain. Thus, the absolute necessity today for a central, public and permanent federative agency to cope with our world-wide problems, stands out more clearly than ever.

With regard to the last century it is interesting to note how the relations between Napoleon Bonaparte and the Jews show the former's understanding of one aspect of the problem, at any rate. Having found it rather futile to deal with the difficulties of Jewish-Christian relationships piecemeal, he broadcasted an invitation to the Jewish leaders of the world to attend his Great Sanhedrin. When it convened in Paris on July 26, 1806, only France, a few adjacent regions, and Italy were represented, but the mere invitation caused Tsar Alexander I to rescind the decree which would have meant the expulsion of the Jews from all the villages of his empire. Thus did the interplay of political forces so wide apart geographically determine the Jew's lot. This body, on account of its subservient acquiescence to Napoleon's demands has earned an inglorious memory, but the idea behind it was not responible for its failure. The fact is that the assemblage dealt with difficulties which all Jews suffered in common, and that its members realized that their several problems could not be isolated from one another or handled separately.

Within ten years of that event came the great Congress of the Powers in Vienna, which dealt with the new situation arising from Napoleon's defeat. Here again the question of emancipating the Jew from the disabilities to which he was everywhere subject was debated by representatives of all the states concerned. The underlying assumption was plainly the feeling that this was a European and not a French or German or Russian domestic issue. Unfortunately, the reaction against liberalism had set in and equality was withheld from the Jews, but the procedure followed by the Congress had set an important precedent for 19th century diplomacy.

What type of international action did the Jews themselves engage in for purposes of self-help? Every one has heard of the famous negotiations of Menasseh ben Israel, who petitioned the English government in person and in writing on a number of occasions to re-admit the Jews to the British Isles, from which they had been expelled some 300 years before (1290). In like manner other leaders of the great Amsterdam community were wont to intervene on behalf of their co-religionists in Germany, Belgium, and elsewhere. It was the heyday of the *shtadlan* and men like Joseph of Rosheim in the sixteenth century and "Jud Süss" Oppenheimer made countless journeys and spent fortunes in secret pleading and cajolements, trying to avert one Jewish disaster after another. In the eighteenth century a ritual murder accusation in Poland confronted the Jews. Their representative body, the Council of the Four Lands, realized the menace involved and sent an envoy, Jacob Selig, to Rome. He succeeded in convincing the Catholic prelates that the charge was untrue, and a public report was rendered by Cardinal Ganganelli, later Pope Clement XIV, which stands as a model of objectivity for all time.

Nothing shows the inadequacy of private individual action more than the fleeting results of the strenuous work of that prince of *shtadlanim,* Sir Moses Montefiore. Here was a very rich Jew of London who tirelessly journeyed whithersoever Jews were in need of protection and assistance. The ritual murder charge in Damascus in 1840 saw him lead a delegation to Turkey and Syria; the Czar's unceasing mistreatment of Jews brought him to St. Petersburg; and his love of Zion caused him to visit and revisit Erez Yisrael and its forgotten Jewish settlements. This public and direct intercession, despite its individual character, did bring certain results, but only of a palliative type. Notwithstanding the great personal sacrifice involved in these long and arduous journeys, Montefiore's method developed nothing of more lasting consequence than did the secret efforts exerted

for similar purposes by the Rothschild family in Vienna and Berlin diplomatic circles. The day was drawing near when Jews would cease to view their plight as part of an immutable social order, and would stop relying on such individual efforts for the amelioration of their status.

There was at this time a French Jew, Jules Carvallo, an engineer, who reflected on the valiant service rendered by such notables as Montefiore and Adolphe Crémieux, and put his thoughts down in an article "On the Necessity of a Jewish Congress." He had in mind a world organization, and it is most interesting to read his simple and unanswerable argument written 85 years ago: "How much more powerful and effective would such individual efforts be if they were coordinated and made permanent!"

But it took a *cause célèbre* much nearer home than Damascus to stir western Jewry into organized activity. In 1858 little Edgar Mortara was taken from his parents in Bologna by papal officers on the ground that his Catholic nurse had secretly baptized him a few years before. Efforts were made all over Europe and great pressure was exerted to recover the child, but to no avail. This violation of an elementary right by an international institution precipitated the establishment of the forerunner of the World Jewish Congress—the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*. Its "Appeal to all Israelites" laid down the following program:

1. To work everywhere for the emancipation and moral progress of the Jews.
2. To lend effectual support to those who suffer through being Jews.
3. To encourage every publication intended to bring about this result.

We have already seen how this new departure in Jewish self-defence evoked an opposition that strangely resembles the current objections to the World Jewish Congress. In America, Philippson's objections were loudly echoed by Isaac Mayer Wise. There is considerable significance in the fact that, despite that opposition, in France, Italy, Austria-Hungary, Holland, and Algeria the *Alliance* movement was hailed by the majority of Jews as the best technique for the purpose. And for over a decade thereafter the *Alliance* carried on political activities on behalf of Jewish rights in every part of the world. Meanwhile, however, the trend toward separate national bodies like the Anglo-Jewish Association in England and similar ones in America and Europe gained impetus among Jewish leaders, chiefly self-constituted, as against the international form of the *Alliance*. Even the *Alliance* itself underwent a change in function, so that in 1900 its Secretary openly stated that its major activity had become educational rather than political. As if during all these years innumerable events had not repeatedly emphasized the inadequacy of anything less than a thoroughgoing international approach to the Jewish problem!

In the same decade that the *Alliance* was founded the British Consul-General in Bucharest wrote to his government that "the peculiar position of the Jews places them under the protection of the civilized world." For a whole generation this western government had negotiated with regard to the persecution of the Roumanian Jews, as part of their concern with all aspects of Roumania's political independence. Finally, in 1872, the British Prime Minister Granville proposed an international conference to discuss the Jewish aspect. The proposal was supported by France and Italy, but could not be carried out because of the opposition of the Russian Government, which was engaged in keeping Roumania unstable for its own advantage. Nevertheless, six years later, at the Congress of Berlin, full equality was internationally guaranteed to the Jews in Roumania. The opposition of the new kingdom, with the cooperation of Russia, was overcome by the combined efforts of Bismarck, Disraeli, and the French representative, with direct or indirect support from Italy, the United States and other countries. The story of how the crafty Roumanian statesmen succeeded in evad-

ing its treaty obligations for fully forty years makes a sorry tale. The protests of various governments, including America's charge that Roumanian Jews were "made doubly paupers by physical and moral depression in their native land", brought no fruit.

The birth of the World Zionist Organization in 1897 must be viewed as foreshadowing the World Jewish Congress for two reasons. It undertook to provide for one important collective Jewish need by means of the international cooperation of the Jews themselves and with the joint assistance of various European governments. Moreover, it was a democratic organization and its first leader, Herzl, was, accordingly, the antithesis of the *shtadlan.* His personality carried weight with Jews and Gentile statesmen not because of his wealth or powerful connections, since he possessed neither of these. For he was the *elected* spokesman and *authorized* agent of several millions of Jews. Neither the *Alliance* nor the wealthy families of England, France, and Germany, recognized this new status conferred upon a modern Jew for the first time, and they were fearful of the possible evil results of his work—as their fathers once feared the *Alliance.* Today it is clear that the democratically governed, internationally organized, Zionist movement has achieved for the Jew infinitely more than the combined activities of all the intrastate Jewish organizations throughout the world.

This innovation of democratic self-government among Jews contrasts sharply with the procedure followed in America several years after the establishment of the Zionist Organization. In 1906 a number of self-appointed notables, who made no effort to reach the broad Jewish masses, organized the American Jewish Committee. In the United States such a step in the direction of oligarchy could not go unnoticed. It will suffice to point to its denunciation by the President of the Central Conference of American Rabbis of that year, Rabbi Joseph Stolz. In his address to his colleagues of the Reform rabbinate he spoke prophetically when he stated that American Jewry would "never be satisfied with a self-constituted, self-perpetuating, mutually admiring, aristocratic committee." It must, nevertheless, be remembered that under the able leadership of Louis Marshall and Judge Sulzberger the Committee pursued a constructive course. It achieved its greatest pre-War success in the abrogation of a commercial treaty with Russia by President Taft in 1912, on the ground of discrimination against American Jews traveling in that country.

Among the arguments which have been used to discourage participation in the World Jewish Congress is the prediction that it will in some manner jeopardize our position in Palestine. This ill-considered statement has been made despite the intimate relations between the Congress and Zionism. Historically it is a most significant argument because it emanates from the American Jewish Committee, which has not only been indifferent to Palestine but which had to be driven to take a more positive stand by international pressure! When Lord Balfour on November 2, 1917, as Secretary for Foreign Affairs, communicated the British Cabinet's "declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations", it came as a shock to the anti-Zionists. It sounded the death-knell of the neo-*shtadlan* and his domination of Jewish life. During the ensuing twenty years the problem of the establishment of the Jewish Agency, the Mandate over Palestine, and in general the fate of the Jews in Palestine have been entrusted to statesmen duly appointed by the governments of the world, duly authorized to deal with the elected representatives of the Jews of the world.

The other great achievement following the end of the World War was, of course, the international recognition of minority rights. Although there are numerous other minority groups in Europe, the political situation was such as to enable the Jewish representatives to fight most effectively for the rights of minorities in general. These historic negotiations were conducted by

an international Committee of Jewish Delegations. In the constitution of this Committee a most active role was played by three American Jewish leaders, Mr. Louis Marshall, Dr. Stephen S. Wise, and Judge Julian W. Mack. These men carried out this among other tasks in the name of the newly-founded American Jewish Congress, then a temporary organization with which the American Jewish Committee was affiliated.

Such in broad outline are the changes which the technique of the defense of Jewish lives and rights has undergone. History is replete with instances of rulers and statesmen who sensed the international scope of the problem as a matter of course, and who dealt with it accordingly. Has any Jew today the moral right to ignore all that and to continue relying on private spokesmen and their negotiations behind closed doors? Shall we endorse the original vigorous *Alliance* program, or its present-day degenerate grandchild? Shall we in the face of the current crisis give heed to the significance of the Jewish Agency in world Jewish life and of the democratic principles of the Zionist movement—or shall we relapse into the *shtadlan* stage once again?

THREE POEMS

By Abraham M. Klein

PREACHER

He quoted Midrash and the psalms;
He fancied parables;
He wept; he smote his anguished palms;
He hushed his voice in spells;
He urged the rich to lavish alms
To save them from their hells. . . .

His eyes were pellets, set between
The sling of bare cheek-bones;
His index finger, long and lean
Shook to accusing tones;
His Adam's apple could be seen
Gulping down godly groans. . . .

Who froze the eager blood to curds?
Who melted adamant?
Who brought up tears? Who conjured words
Wherewith to cavil cant?
Who called his audiences herds?
Who phrased the subtle taunt?

And at his speech the old Jews wept;
With prayer-shawls they dried
Their tears; the women overleapt
Decorum, and they cried;
And every little urchin kept
Near to his father's side. . . .

They wept, and they repented while
Gehenna crackled from
His lips, and Satan spread his guile
And scourges made a hum;
They wept and they repented while
His terrors struck them dumb. . . .

PROTHALAMIUM

This is the man who brought to me
The thumb-print of the Deity;
Who hung upon my hairless chest
The fringèd talismanic vest;
This is the Jew who once did hem
My heart with old Jerusalem;
Who solved each letter's mystic hook
Upon the parchment pentateuch,
And poured me out the Kiddush-wine,
Sparkling with all the clandestine
Eye-winks of angels; this is he
Who made my youth worth memory. . . .
Most fitting is it then that this
Old Rabbi, Eden-bent, should now
Sanctify our marriage-vow. . . .

INCOGNITO

Under a humble name he came to us;
Died; and left his wife executrix
Of tears, and a name for which the saints
would fuss. . . .
I believe that he was one of the Thirty-six....

Palestine Rhapsody

By Miriam J. Cohen

THE current political situation in Palestine has evoked all sorts of tracts in defense of Zionism. Learned economists have compiled comparative statistics on the relative productivity of Palestine before and since the Mandate. Brilliant dialecticians have armed us with arguments to pit against the arguments of our opponents. Astute statesmen have attempted to play our pawn with sophisticated expediency, and to manoeuver us out of a stalemate or downright defeat. Sentimentalists have wailed ineffectually. All of us are trying to keep a stiff upper lip and maintain faith and courage. In the tenseness and tragedy of the last months we have been shuttling back and forth between hope and despair. We have lost for the moment the pride of our achievement, the humor of our errors, and the joy of our love. This is understandable. But it is wholesome and sane to recall even now, in our grief, some of the throb of the pulsating life that is part of normal Palestine.

Perhaps nothing could have a more tonic effect than Dorothy Kahn's book, *Spring Up, O Well.** It is a fillip and a challenge. This Palestine is too brimming with life to fail; it is too breathless with the wonder of creation even to understand death.

I

Let me say in the beginning that this book is not a flawless work of art. But then neither is Tel-Aviv a flawless city; nor is Rehavia a flawless Mayfair; nor have the *kvutzot* flawless plumbing; the streets of the Old City are not flawlessly paved, nor is the Hadar HaCarmel a model city. Dorothy Kahn has caught the noise of Tel-Aviv, the silly pretensions of Rehavia, the timelessness of the hills, the miracle of the *kvutzot*. She has felt the aching beauty of Jerusalem; she has drunk luke warm iced tea and insipid fruit soup, and eaten soggy jelly pancakes. She has found water faucets with no water, restaurants with no tables, rude people, pretentious people, laborers and *gazoz* vendors, professors and land speculators; she has seen the cathedral-like mysticism of the Old City in Jerusalem, and the cheeses and sheep entrails and blind camels that are also there; the magic whiteness of Safed, and the lush green of Jericho, the curve of Mt. Tabor and the flat ugliness of Tel-Aviv. That is Palestine. You cannot judge it by ordinary standards. The book is like Palestine, so that you will not mind its being a bit too much rhapsodic journalese, and a bit too much on the breathless-wonder side. Ordinary techniques of literary criticism can be forgotten.

One finds in Palestine those fundamental elements which are not apparent to most of us who live urban lives in America. New York, for example, is such a perfected machine that most of us are far removed from the sources of its power. Our social consciousness is expressed in terms of intellectual identifications. We are more concerned with civic policy than with actual civic creativity. When a new tri-borough bridge is built we are awe-struck by the concrete results of modern engineering, but we do not feel the actual thrill of creation.

In Palestine political arguments are passionate—"where there are two Jews there are three opinions" is true in Palestine too. But political and economic theories do not take the place of definite enterprise. It is the difference between admiring a bridge and planning and building it. In New York the builder is remote; in Palestine each person honestly thinks he has had some share in building it. In Palestine communal responsibility is not a text-book phrase which has to be learned. It is a part of life, and it becomes a way of life insofar as it gives men a sense of proportion and balance which

*Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1936.

is unattainable when one's goal is personal.

Dorothy Kahn has expressed this in her chapter on art in Palestine: "Like much else in Palestine today, deep joy in her art is withheld from all but those who glory in beginnings, in growth, in searchings, in struggle, in mistakes. . . . Those who are attuned only to perfection, only to the end of things will be deaf and blind to Palestine's art. . . . New Palestine has not created. She is creating."

She has discovered also that quality of infinite patience and orientation in time which is essentially of the East. In Europe and in America we work for our children. If we have foresight we work for our grandchildren; if we have vision we work for our great-grandchildren. In Palestine we work for the Land and vision extends to eternity.

This sense of communal responsibility, this sense of a vital interest that is not egoistic has infected a whole people, and gives to visitors in Palestine new criteria for evaluation. The most menial tasks are fraught with farreaching implications; they cease to be only routine jobs and become component elements in the reconstruction of a civilization. They become dignified, and the dignity they assume elicits the personal satisfaction which must rightfully belong to a worker. So that the destructive feeling of frustration, the curse of so much current activity, is nullified. And this re-creation of values, this sense of a more than momentary achievement that one feels in Palestine makes of living there a true art, insofar as it binds man to men in a common enterprise, with a common future as its goal. The diaspora Jew, as a Jew, has not been able to achieve this solidarity with his fellow Jews; but Palestine has succeeded in curing the Jew of the effects of centuries of personal futility and psychic frustration.

Besides this there is the psychic advantage of living in one's own country. Can American Jews completely believe that to be told "You look goyish" in Palestine does not even remotely imply a compliment? Can American Jews appreciate the relaxation and assurance that comes of completely belonging? To be a Jew without apology is an achievement; to be a Jew without self-consciousness is salvation; to be a Jew without the pride that protests too much is a triumph. To be simply a Jew is the ultimate miracle which Palestine alone has made possible.

Dorothy Kahn is a Jew. She is not the sentimentalist who sees no faults, nor the perfectionist who sees nothing else. She has humor and tolerance, an extraordinary feeling for color and life and above all, love.

II

The people going to Palestine on her boat were all the Jews of all the world.

"The new Jews smoked on Sabbath and ate ham. . . . How dare Rabbi Shapiro presume to question his right to eat meat on buttered bread? Rabbi Shapiro's contribution had been only to maintain within his people the consciousness that they were Jews. Zvi's contribution would be to turn that consciousness into constructive channels."

"Then there was Mrs. Sternberg. Her husband had been a Zionist for many years. . . . He had written that Tel-Aviv was becoming as modern as Brooklyn. So she had come to try life there."

There was Miriam to whom "Brooklyn was merely a city in which one happened to be born to leave as soon as one could secure a labor certificate."

And countless others were there. All of them with different ideals, different reasons for coming to Palestine, but all of them to be part of the country which is "becoming."

Here in a paragraph is Tel-Aviv:

"But despite all this frenzy of brick, mortar, violins, and bookbinder, there is not enough of anything in Tel-Aviv. There are not enough homes. Not enough rooms in the houses. Not enough restaurants. Not enough. . . . Already someone has set up housekeeping on a balcony which, to all intents and purposes, is attached to nothing at all." It is this way because it is filled with Americans and Englishmen

and Russians and South Africans and Germans and Poles. Each one of them dreamed about what an all-Jewish city should be; each one of them is trying to make it that way. And that is Tel-Aviv. You are impatient with it, you are exasperated, you love it, you hate it, you laugh at it, but you are tolerant—and that too is a part of a way of life.

Jerusalem, according to Dorothy Kahn, is many things. It is much more and much less than her judgment of it. And for the much less I cannot condemn it as heartily as she does. She is so tolerant of the rude arrogance of the youth of Tel-Aviv; why could she not be more tolerant of the petty pretensions of Rehavia and Talbieh? For the present, we can afford to be indulgent. The Spanish patios and kid gloves of Rehavia are surely no more part of the eternal fabric of Palestine than the riveting on the Hadar HaCarmel, or the rudeness of the bus conductors. The heady wine of freedom has intoxicated each according to his origin, and each according to his temperament. But even in Rehavia you will hear passionate talk of the Land. An ideal society cannot be formed at once—no more than a perfect art. Both Tel-Aviv and Rehavia will become mellow in time. The friction of life will wear down the varnish of Rehavia and the crust of Tel-Aviv alike; what is fundamental and honest will remain with each. It will not appear today, nor tomorrow, but it will appear is a part of a way of life.

III

Jerusalem, Haifa, Tel-Aviv—they are cities. All the world has cities, but Palestine alone has its *kvutzot*. "The story of the *kvutzot* and the *haluzim* in Palestine could be told in volumes. And yet this is almost the whole story. People who have come to redeem the soil of Palestine. People who believe in living by toil. People who believe that brotherly love means sharing equally—literally sharing equally a crust of bread. People who will have nothing to do with the accumulation of money as individuals. . . . Parliaments, the League of Nations, the world at large may question the Jewish experiment in Palestine. But no one questions these thousands of *haluzim* who believe only in working and sharing."

The *kvutzot* are ugly and most of them have no screens, and the flies get in the milk, and the plumbing is not modern; but the girls walk very proudly, with dignity and with assurance. At a Jewish wedding in Nahalal the bride and groom disappeared. They had forgotten, in the excitement of the wedding, to milk the cows and had rushed back immediately after the ceremony to do it. Jewish children are bright-eyed and there is no diffidence in their carriage. And this is another part of a way of life in Palestine. Central heating and hot water are not the only gauge of success.

Palestine is not the realization of any single dream of what it should be. But into it have been woven many dreams which are still being dreamed, and in their substance are evils which have not yet been eradicated, ideals which are impracticable, mistakes resulting from inexperience. It is a strange mixture of the naivete of childhood, the hysteria of adolescence, and the wisdom of age.

The Colonial office knows nothing of this Palestine, nor the assimilationists who can never be 100 per cent, but are doomed to be 110 per cent Americans; nor the pious ones who think of it as dead and sacred soil, and of Hebrew as a sacred tongue for prayers; nor the communists. But there are those who know. They know the Palestine of tears and grief, of sweat and blood, of kid gloves and torn shirts, of wanton murder and brooding peace. They know it with exultation and with despair, with regrets for its faults, with joy in its triumphs, with pity and heartbreak for its tragedies, with human courage and with superhuman patience.

And to those Palestine has taught a way of life. That is why girls like Dorothy Kahn relinquish the convenience and prestige of their American passports, and have chosen Palestine as their home.